

REMARKS

Entry of the above amendment and reconsideration of the above-referenced application in view of the above amendment, and of the following remarks, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, and 24 are pending in this case. Claims 1 and 12 are amended herein and claim 14 is cancelled herein. Claim 24 is added herein.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-5, 7-8, 10, and 12-14 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by TSAU (2002/0038903).

Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is unanticipated by TSAU as there is no disclosure or suggestion in the reference of at least one additional ILD layer isolating the support structures from the contact layer. TSAU teaches a multilevel metallization structure that is connected from M1 to M5. The metal levels are connected through each etchstop and dielectric layer. While each metal level includes an etchstop layer with higher dielectric constant than the ILD material, there is no disclosure or suggestion of any layer isolating the metal trench 170 from the underlying layers. Metal trench 170 is connected to the underlying via which extends through the etchstop layer 169. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 and the claims dependent thereon are unanticipated by TSAU.

Applicant respectfully submits that dependent claim 8 is further unanticipated by TSAU as there is no disclosure or suggestion in the reference of the support structures being located under a bond pad. The Examiner refers to element 170 as a bond pad. However, there is no indication in the reference of a bond pad. Element 170 is a trench filled metallization line of metal level M5. Metal level M5 is shown in Figures 2j, 3j, 4j, and 5j. No bond pad is illustrated. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 8 is further patentable over the reference.

Applicant respectfully submits that claim 12 and the claims dependent thereon as well as newly added claim 24 are similarly unanticipated by TSAU as there is no disclosure or suggestion in the reference of the support structures being located below a bond pad.

In light of the above, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the Examiner's rejections and allowance of claims 1-5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, and 24. If the Examiner has any questions or other correspondence regarding this application, Applicant requests that the Examiner contact Applicant's attorney at the below listed telephone number and address.

Respectfully submitted,

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